

Evolving from a Heteronormative World into an Intersectional Language Curriculum: Creating a LGBTQI+ Safe Space in the Classroom

ABSTRACT

Over the last few decades, advances in social reform in the area of LGBTQI+ protection have been taking place in many countries around the world. However, resources on language learning need to address the erasure of sexual and gender diversity in the language curriculum as current materials remain focused on the portrayal of a heteronormative world in which non-normative ways of living are constantly obliterated (Gray, 2022). As educators, our objective is to create a safe space where this reality is not silenced. This chapter will take the reader through a series of sessions which incorporate LGBTQI+ content to our syllabus, acquire competences in the usage of inclusive language and reflect on the concept of intersectional tensions in our communities. In addition, our students were prompted to develop a range of mediation techniques such as explaining concepts and summarising texts, debating societal issues and writing argumentative texts.

Keywords

LGBTQ+, intersectionality, inclusive language, didactic language materials, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Companion Volume, illustrative descriptors, mediation.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces a series of materials and resources that takes into consideration the need for sexual and gender diversity as well as other intersectional factors. These recently designed assets are aimed at creating a more fair and realistic language curriculum that mirrors the diversity in our society. They are comprised of four sessions that have been developed to accomplish the above objectives using articles, films or presentations as the initial point of reference for accessing authentic materials. Thus, the first session delves around the topic of lesbian and other modes of love relationships and takes as its main resource a film. *Elisa y Marcela* (Coixet, 2019) about the first same-sex marriage in Spain in the early 20th century. The second one prompts students to watch an academic presentation on the topic of inclusive language with the purpose of acquiring relevant knowledge of this area before putting it into practice. The third one introduces intersectional topics, making use of the wheel of privilege and an article about privileged people's unusual initiatives as the main sources for reflection and discussion. The final session focuses on *Una Mujer Fantástica* (Lelio, 2017), a highly acclaimed film about the vicissitudes suffered by a transgender woman, which is taken as the main source for learning about trans issues and concerns.

This series of tasks was carried out with undergraduate students of Spanish as a Foreign Language at the School of European Languages, Culture and Society, University College London. About 40 participants, who have an approximate level C1 (CEFR) of linguistic competence, took part in the study. They were divided into five groups of about eight students each. Sessions last one hour and 40 minutes with a ten-minute break in the middle. Additional work outside the lessons was required as a way to consolidate grammar, lexical and discursive items as well as competences and strategies developed during the course of each session. A variety of mediation activities are fostered throughout these

didactic units, based on the updates carried out in the recent versions the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and its Companion Volume (CV) (Council of Europe, 2018, 2020), which include mediation acquiring a pivotal role, as well as the creation of new categories and descriptors, among other aspects that have been revised. Broadly speaking, mediation is defined as “any procedure, arrangement or action in a given context to reduce the distance between two (or more poles) of otherness between which there is tension (Coste & Cavalli, 2015, p. 27).” Thus, the language learner has evolved into a user of language and a social agent enabling knowledge while mediating with others. This progression of the linguistic and cultural context towards a more social and democratic background opens a series of different perspectives for the language learning context.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RATIONALE

Since the 1990s, many (largely Western) universities have borne witness to the steady growth in the production of research and scholarship on gender and language, resulting in the topic being included in the curricula of an array of modules. Castro and Ergun (2018, p. 128) even acknowledge the pioneering work of Canadian feminist translators in the context of Quebec in the 1970s and 1980s. This group, composed by translators such as Barbara Godard, Marlene Wildeman, Fiona Strachen, Kathey Mezei, Linda Gaboriau, Susanne de Lotbiniere-Hardwood, Luise von Flotow and Howard Scott, created new grammatical expressions in order to resist and subvert patriarchal forms of language when translating feminist texts from French (where gender is often made explicit linguistically) into English. More recently, these analyses of linguistic representations of identities in translated texts also span trans and gender-queer identities (Larkosh, 2011; Santaemilia, 2017 and 2018 and Bassi, 2017). Since each language has a different degree of adaptability to non-binary expression, it would seem of paramount importance that this commitment to champion the need for non-sexist language and embrace non-heteronormativity in translation (Baxter, 2005) should also spread to the teaching of foreign languages so that our students can learn how to recognise and use it. Indeed, Castro and Ergun (2018, p. 139) avow that pedagogical intervention is key, for it will “help us engage in more ethical translational encounters with one another – encounters that do not otherise, assimilate or fetishise our differences, but rather bring us eye-to-eye and connect us across those differences without pursuing oneness or sameness”.

Whilst Miller de Rutté and Morgan’s innovative study (2023) highlights the benefits of introducing social justice topics in the Spanish as a foreign language setting, Engra Minaya’s in-depth review of Spanish as a foreign language materials (2020) concludes that, with the notable exceptions of works such as Díaz Alarcón and Navarrete (2022) and recent initiatives such as the *e-Expert Seminar Series in Translation and Modern Language Education: LGBTQI+ Issues in Modern Language and Translation Education (University College London and Universidad de Córdoba, 2021)*, sexual diversity and the LGBTQI+ community are virtually absent in the Spanish language classroom. This erasure has also been prominently denounced and tackled in the English as a foreign language context by Gray (2021) and, Baruzzi and Guijarro Ojeda (2016) and Guijarro Ojeda (2004), among others. With the aim of filling in this gap in the Spanish as a foreign language context and to equip Spanish language teachers with appropriate guidance and inspiration to develop

these traditionally silenced topics (Guijarro Ojeda and Ruiz Cecilia, 2013), we shall suggest a series of recently designed assets for advanced students of Spanish as a foreign language. Their creation responds to the need to design and offer a more just language curriculum that acknowledges and celebrates the diversity on our society and follows Guijarro Ojeda and Ruiz Cecilia's (2013) recommendation to use different resources such as film, news, media or anthropological perspectives on gender and sexual orientation. At the end of the sessions, students were asked to fill in a questionnaire which principally sought to ascertain whether their sense of belonging increased when working with these materials and topics.

DIDACTIC SEQUENCE OF SESSIONS ON LGTBQI+ CONTENT

This section presents a range of materials and resources that address the importance of sexual and gender diversity, along with other intersecting factors. These newly created assets aim to establish a language curriculum that is more inclusive and reflective of the diversity present in our society. The materials consist of four sessions that have been designed to achieve the aforementioned goals, utilising articles, films, or presentations as the starting point for accessing authentic materials.

Structure of the sessions

As seen in Figure 1, a key innovation of the most recent versions of the CEFR CV (2018, 2020) lies in the replacement of the four skills (speaking, listening, writing and reading) with the linguistic modes of reception, production, interaction, and mediation, situated in the central axis of the linguistic equation. Despite, in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 157), communication was already defined as an "integral part of tasks where participants engage in interaction, production, reception, mediation, or a combination of two or more of these." Thus, each session developed for our syllabus contains tasks to enhance learners' competence in these four modes; reception, production and interaction by fostering the development of mediation strategies that combine them. As such, our students work on different types of resources (films, articles and presentations) either during the lesson or at home. This is to acquire theoretical and practical expertise in the content areas that will be discussed in class, in the form of mediation tasks aiming explaining new concepts, summarising ideas, debating, delivering short oral presentations and essay writing.

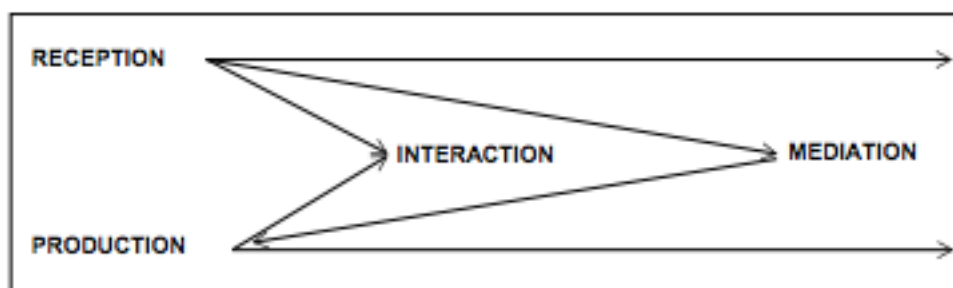


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document.. The interrelation between the four modes (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 32)

Table 1 provides a description for each stage of the lesson as well as explaining the general objectives for the recently designed tasks. As seen in this table, sessions start with a warm-

up task where information on the content topic of the lesson will be elicited from students. Likewise, some relevant lexical, grammar and discursive items might also be introduced. This is to assess students' previous knowledge on the main topic area and selected linguistic elements to be developed throughout the lesson. Hence, tasks are coherently scaffolded following the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), so that they are not excessively challenging but tailor-made to the learners' language proficiency in any given context.

Table 1: Stages of the sessions

Number	Stage	Time (min)	Description	Objectives
1	Warm-up	10	Introducing the topic area that will be discussed in subsequent stages Introducing lexical, grammar and discursive items, and contextualising intercultural knowledge	Acquiring a general knowledge of the context around the topic area to be discussed in detail Eliciting from students lexical and grammar items to assess previous knowledge and competence
2	Reading / listening /speaking task	20	Focusing on reception strategies to acquire knowledge on the main topic area to be discussed	Learning something new about the topic area
3	Mediation task	10	Summarising and explaining the main ideas of the text or video clip	Showing understanding of the underlining topic area and new concepts
4	Focus on grammar, lexical items and discursive elements	30	Practising new items carrying out a number of activities of different nature	Revising and/or consolidating new items provided
5	Debating the topic area acquiring different roles	20	Focusing on oral production skills (fluency, pronunciation and intonation)	Expressing personal ideas and being on someone's shoes
6	Wrap- up reflexion	10	Reflecting on lessons learnt either in spoken or written language	Discussing knowledge, strategies and competences acquired during the lesson

In the second stage of our sessions, students work on reading a section of article, listening to a presentation or watching a clip from a film or academic presentation. It is key to note that previous to the session, students often work on an initial authentic source to acquire additional understanding of the main topic area to be discussed in class. The first mediation task is presented in the third stage of the lesson as students interact with the resource introduced in the previous stage. This is done by summarising its main ideas, explaining complex concepts in their own words or having an initial debate on what they have read or listened to. The fourth stage has a focus on grammar, vocabulary and discursive elements of speech mainly based on the resources selected by the lecturers from a range of language learning published materials. For this reason, this paper does not include them, as they have not been created by the authors of this chapter. The fifth stage consists of a debate where students adopt a particular role and reflect on the main topic of the lesson. In the final stage, learners reflect on what has been learnt whilst they might produce a written text or short oral presentation arguing in favour or against a particular area related to what has been covered during the lesson. Thus, tasks are organised with an increasing level of difficulty and creativity involved to instigate both autonomous learning and creative problem-solving skills. As such, they have been carefully scaffolded following Vygotsky's principles on learning: "[s]caffolding not only produces immediate results, but also instils the skills necessary for independent problem solving in the future" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

Session 1: Inside lesbian and other forms of love relationships

The first session is designed around the Spanish film *Elisa y Marcela* (Coixet, 2019). The film portrays the life of two women that married each other at the beginning of the 19th century in what became the first same-sex wedding in Spanish history. The main objective is to develop training experiences and resources for curriculum liberation; "an approach to curriculum is necessary that is concerned not just with the common senses that education reinforces but also with the basic possibilities for being, knowing, and agency that it makes available" (De Lissovoy & Alex, n.d.). This can be done by fostering the inclusion of the LGBTQI+ curriculum through the integration of linguistic and cultural skills into the language lesson, for example by working on a series of tasks that involve: eliciting hypothesis about the film from the trailer, discussing relevant topic areas based on different media outlets, analysing journalist texts based on the complementary areas connected to the film. The final outcome of this session is the writing of an argumentative text that discusses the reality of LGBTQI+ communities.

During the warm-up stage of the lesson, students watch first a trailer of the above film (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EcVFjs8it4>) and subsequently the directors' short interview about the film (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6704898/>). Once this has been done twice with the purpose of registering as much information as possible, they formulate hypotheses about the film with regards to its genre, where and when it was set, characterisation of the main protagonists, potential plot lines, etc. The first three questions are presented before they watch the trailer, the following ones, after they done it. A final question aims at students to compare the information provided by the tráiler and by the interview with the director of the film.

- *Is the impression of the film that a trailer can give reliable?*
- *What reactions does it produce in the audience?*
- *What characteristics of the film can it give us a hint about?*

- *In what period and place does the action take place? (Pay attention to clothing, landscape, way of speaking, hairstyles, etc.)*
- *Where does the action take place?*
- *What film genre does it belong to?*
- *Who are the main characters?*
- *What is the plot about?*
- *What is the audience's reaction?*
- *What information does Coixet offer us in the trailer that we did not know before?*

This is an engaging task for students as it helps them acquire initial information about the main topic area whilst introducing linguistic tools that will be developed throughout the session, such as the contrast between indicative and subjunctive modes, which is a useful linguistic item for formulating hypotheses about the film.

During the second stage of the lesson, students work individually for a short period of time. Half of the students will read one journalistic article whereas the other half work with a different one. The first article "Las actrices de la película 'Elisa y Marcela' lamentan que continúe la homofobia"

(<https://ecodiario.economista.es/cine/noticias/9875407/05/19/Las-actrices-de-la-pelicula-Elisa-y-Marcela-lamentan-que-continue-la-homofobia.html>) is a narrative text

whereas the second one is an argumentative one "Crítica: Elisa y Marcela"

(<https://cineuropa.org/es/newsdetail/368050/>). This is followed by a mediation task that consists of an information gap activity where students need to explain and summarise to their partners the article they have read, which is unknown to the other group. This type of activity is based on the CEFR CV illustrative descriptor "Relaying specific information" included within the "Mediating a text" scale which "involves passing on to another person the content of a text to which they do not have access, often because of linguistic, cultural, semantic or technical barriers" (CEFR CV, 2020, p. 91).

- *In groups, identify the main differences between the two texts. Next, we will explain the characteristics of argumentative texts.*

In the fourth stage of the lesson, as with other sessions, there is a focus on grammar, lexical and/or discursive elements. Different usages of the verbs "ser" and "estar" as well as subjunctive and indicative modes are analysed with relevant examples and short fill-in-the-gaps and other exercises. Also, students will work on deducing the characteristics of each type of text before the teacher explains in greater detail features related to argumentative texts with the help of a Power Point presentation. For example, they need to discuss the main objective of each text, their structure, potential arguments in favour of a formulated question (in the case of argumentative texts), type of language, tone and style.

In the following stage, students read one more article based on a short interview with Narciso de Gabriel, a historian who discusses what is known about the lives of these two characters: "¿Cómo acabó la historia de Elisa y Marcela? Quien más sabe nos lo cuenta" (<https://www.elespanol.com/quincemil/articulos/actualidad/como-acabo-la-historia-de-elisa-y-marcela-quien-mas-sabe-nos-lo-cuenta>). Students compare what is known by this expert and what they know about the film. This is to prepare them for the

task that they need to complete for the following session. This activity is followed by a second mediation task where students will adopt a series of roles considering a range of love relationships (homosexual, polyamorous and arranged marriages).

- Debate with your classmates in groups of 3-4 people on the topic "Different forms of love." Afterwards, we will conclude with a discussion.

Love between LGBTQ couples

- Do you think it is fully accepted?
- Besides the one we just studied, what movies or series have contributed to making these relationships visible and normalised?
- Can we demand that religions celebrate gay marriages?
- What are the main advances that still need to be made to achieve equality?

Polyamorous relationships

- Is it a new trend?
- Is it more problematic than monogamy?
- Will it become a more acceptable practice?
- Can children from a polyamorous couple grow up healthy and stable?

Arranged marriages

- Are they always forced marriages?
- Do they have a higher chance of success than love marriages?
- Are they important to prevent assimilation of minorities?
- Do they offer more stable homes for children?

During the wrap-up final part of the lesson, students reflect about what they have learnt during the session. They will also receive instructions for their 2-minute presentation task that they will need to prepare for the following session. They will have to watch the whole film at home and reach their own conclusions about what might be true about the lives of these characters as pictured in the film. Needless to say, this session has a clear focus on all linguistic modes introduced in the earlier section, reception exercises (watching the trailer and interview to the film's director, reading the given articles), production and interaction (exchanging ideas about what they watched or read) and mediation (summarising the articles for their partners whilst "Facilitating collaborative information with peers" and "Collaborating to construct meaning").

- Has your perspective changed regarding the various types of romantic relationships we have discussed in this class?
- Comment on at least three characteristics of argumentative texts.
- Think of three examples of uses of "ser" and "estar" that you tend to confuse.
- Tell us about three words or expressions you have learned in this class and do not want to forget.

Session 2: Encouraging the usage of inclusive language

The second session aims at introducing the concept of inclusive language with a view to acquiring formulas on how to use it. In our department, students are accustomed to reading messages from their lecturers that use inclusive language, so in the warm-up stage of the

session, students are asked to provide examples based on the formulas for inclusivity they might be familiar with both in the Spanish and English languages (or even in other languages that they know).

In the second stage of the lesson, students are provided with the opportunity to watch the first ten minutes of an academic presentation (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfVPEqGh_lw&ab_channel=SociolingUASeminario) by a Spanish researcher, titled “Realidades no binarias en la lengua” (López, 2020) which introduces formulas for making Spanish a more inclusive language whilst encouraging the audience to use it in their daily lives. Students are asked to take notes and they are given a worksheet with exercises to complete about the presentation. They need to respond to a series of questions demonstrating understanding of the content introduced in the presentation. This is another mediation task prompting them to provide additional examples of inclusive language as well as to summarise the main lessons learnt from the video watched. The first three questions need to be discussed before the presentation is watched by the learners.

Before watching this academic talk, answer the following questions:

- Explain what inclusive language means to you.
- Do you know any ways to speak/write using inclusive language in both English and Spanish?
- Do you think inclusive language is the same as non-binary language?

Read the following questions before listening to the keynote and answer them afterwards:

- What is the difference between grammatical gender and non-binary gender?
- What is the morpheme that the speaker usually uses in adjectives and nouns with non-binary gender?
- What is the topic of their thesis?
- Explain the following terms in your own words: non-binary, cis/cisgender, transgender, intersex, and intersexuality.
- Why do they prefer to talk about non-binary language rather than inclusive language?
- Comment on the different nuances of inclusive or non-binary language for these expressions:
 - mis amigos y amigas (my friends, both male and female)
 - mis amigxs (my friends, non-gender-specific)
 - el/la profesor/a (the teacher, male and female)
 - l@s niñ@s (the children, gender-neutral)
- Decide whether the following expressions or morpheme uses belong to direct or indirect inclusive language:
 - el claustro (the faculty, gender-neutral)
 - el profesorado (the teaching staff, gender-neutral)
 - las personas que residen (not los residentes) (the people who reside, gender-neutral)
 - sus intérpretes (not los intérpretes) (their interpreters, gender-neutral)
 - quienes actúan (those who act, gender-neutral)

- neidre (mother or father, non-gender-specific)
- enebé (non-binary person, gender-neutral)
- latinx (gender-neutral term for Latino/Latina)
- amigue (gender-neutral term for friend)
- mi amigue es une autore fantástique y famose (my friend is a fantastic and famous author, gender-neutral language with alternate spelling)
- mi amigx es unx autorx fantásticx y famosx (my friend is a fantastic and famous author, gender-neutral language with alternate spelling and symbols)
- Should you say "es muy buene persone"? Why?
- Comment on which pronouns (in English and Spanish) you usually include in the electronic signature of your social media accounts (Zoom, Twitter, Facebook, Outlook, etc.).
- Briefly explain the key takeaways from this presentation.

This warm-up task will be followed by students' work on analysing the features of an argumentative article about inclusive language and its usage. Students will reflect on the potential advantages and disadvantages of using this particular type of language and express their level of agreement with the ideas of the author. This stage is followed by a series of mediation tasks that help students to fully understand the presentation they have watched, to practise these new formulas and to summarise their key learnings about linguistic inclusivity. As for the CEFR (2020), these mediation tasks are: "Note-taking" when extracting key ideas from the talk, "Relaying specific information" when summarising the main ideas, "Mediating concepts" when explaining difficult concepts outlined by the presenter whilst "Collaborating to construct meaning" when providing additional examples based on the formulas enumerated during the talk.

As with all sessions discussed in this paper, during the fourth stage, there is a focus on grammar, lexical and discursive items. This time students have to look at the formulas provided and deduct word order, syntax and morphological elements typical from these new formulas. Next, students read a new article "Lenguaje inclusivo: ¿Sí o no?" (Gutiérrez, 2021). As it is an argumentative text, students need to deduct grammatical, lexical and syntactic structures and items that are key features for these types of texts.

- Read the following article and identify the characteristics of the argumentative texts we have been working on. Additionally, find examples of formal register verbs that replace placeholder verbs.

Students debate about the advantages and disadvantages of using inclusive language. This discussion culminates in the writing of a 350-words argumentative text on this topic area expressing their own opinion. This text needs to be submitted in the following lesson after it has been peer reviewed by another student. It is important to point out that students need to watch the rest of the presentation introduced at the beginning of the session in order to complete this task successfully. The final stage consists of a reflection on the lessons learnt throughout the session.

As with other sessions, there has been a clear focus on the linguistic modes introduced earlier: reception exercises (watching the academic presentation and reading the article, given), production and interaction (exchanging ideas about what they watched or read) and

mediation (summarising the main ideas from both the presentation and the whilst “Facilitating collaborative information with peers” and “Collaborating to construct meaning” when discussing difficult concepts, reaching out conclusions and reflecting on the lessons learnt).

Session 3: Intersectional concerns and disputes

The third session introduces the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1979), and capitalises on the importance of intersectionality as a tool to understand and highlight invisible power relations and the ways in which they can shape inequality and discrimination. The term intersectionality was first coined by Professor Kimberly Crenshaw in 1989, and it is now central to several disciplines such as Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Gender Studies, Economics or Political Science. In 1995 an entry was added to the Oxford dictionary with the following definition: “Intersectionality is the network of connexions between social categories such as race, class and gender, especially when this may result in additional disadvantage or discrimination.”

First, students are asked to observe and comment on a Spanish version of the wheel of power and privilege, which is taken from *Una guía para prevención de la discriminación LGBTIfóbica y machista: conceptos y actividades de diversidad afectivo-sexual y de género para el equipo educativo* (Agüero García and Calvo Pérez, 2019). This wheel is a sketchnote originally created by Canadian teacher and author Sylvia Duckworth in 2006, and different versions have proliferated since then. During the warm-up stage, students observe and reflect on the wheel of privilege versus oppression taking into consideration the topics discussed in previous lessons on LGBTQI+ and the need to use inclusive language. In small groups, students are asked to provide their own interpretations of the wheel. They are warned of the sensitivity of the topic, but those wishing to reflect on their own privilege (in terms of race, class, sexuality, education, etc.) are invited to share their thoughts with the rest of the class. Questions on how to best utilise their privilege, and the types of oppression that can be found on campus are posed to the group. Hence, as a visual, practical instrument, not only does the wheel help students to apply the concept of intersectionality to the exercises that will be carried out next and fine-tune their linguistic command, but it also raises their awareness of EDI values, fosters their emotional skills, and encourages them to embrace difference. In this sense, the need to create a learning environment that promotes a culture of inclusion, teaches a curriculum that can engage students from all backgrounds, and where all students can feel supported, cannot be underestimated.

In the second stage of the lesson, students are divided into two groups in order to carry out an information gap activity with an article from Spanish newspaper *El País* titled “Podría ser rico, pero no quiero: jóvenes que renuncian a sus fortunas para luchar contra la desigualdad” (in the English version of *El País* the article appears under the following title: “The millennials giving up fortunes for social justice”)¹. Two main reasons prompted the choice of this text: first, the level of complexity is appropriate for the consolidation of the C1

¹ For the full article in Spanish, see: <https://elpais.com/ideas/2022-10-07/podria-ser-rico-pero-no-quiero-jovenes-que-renuncian-a-sus-fortunas-para-luchar-contr-la-desigualdad.html>. For the English version, see: <https://english.elpais.com/society/2022-10-08/the-millennials-giving-up-fortunes-for-social-justice.html>

level sought in our module. Whilst the comprehension of the article should not pose much difficulty for our students, the myriad of collocations, linking words, idioms and technical terms allows for the expansion of their vocabulary and for the use of mediation as a tool to bridge any linguistic, cultural or epistemological gaps. Secondly, the article's treatment of the concepts of privilege, philanthropy and social justice allows students to approach the debate in a non-threatening, non-invasive way. The text focuses on the portrayal of several millennials who, after living lives of abundance, started to question their own fortunes and are now committed to reducing wealth inequality. This has led them to distribute their inherited wealth in order to support different social and environmental causes.

To begin the activity, students are divided into two groups. Each group is given one half of the article, and the two groups are prompted to exchange the information read. In order to fulfil this task and with the purpose of expanding their vocabulary and consolidating their use of linking words in Spanish, each group was given a) a list of key words for which they needed to offer a definition/explanation and b) a list of linking words with which to structure their discourse.

Group A:

Key words: milenial, amasar, privilegio, redistribuir, 'traidores de clase'.

Linking words: En principio, entonces, sin embargo, aunque, a pesar de que, para concluir.

Group B:

Key words: *Altas esferas, filantropía, impuestos, bienestar, solidaridad*

Linking words: Para comenzar, por consiguiente, o sea, no obstante, hasta que, finalmente.

As previously mentioned, the Council of Europe published the CEFR CV (2018, 2020). In order to complete this exercise, students have to implement complex communicative skills through the use of mediation with each other. As previously stated, mediation is a tool that provides educators with the opportunity to encourage critical thinking, structure work, and prevent and solve problems, among others. In this sense, we find that North and Piccardo's (2017: 85) identification of four types of mediation are especially relevant in this session, as we find they are put into practice when carrying out the information gap activity described above:

a) Linguistic mediation that comprehends both interlinguistic and intralinguistic elements. Given that typically more than 50% of students in our groups are international students, this mediation not only takes place in Spanish, but also in different languages when students make use of English or any other their mother tongue with their peers in this multilingual environment.

b) Cultural mediation seeks to facilitate cultural awareness and understanding.

c) Social mediation, when students or the teacher function as intermediaries to remedy a lack of understanding. Although this is mainly due to linguistic gaps, it can also be caused by political or cultural misunderstandings.

d) Pedagogic mediation, notably when each group of students has to summarise their fragment of the article and explain their glossary of key words to the other group.

Thus, mediation is employed to foster and improve students' complex communicative skills, which comprehend not only the traditional language skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking –, but the modes of reception, production and interaction with more advanced skills such as condensing information, rephrasing ideas, providing definitions, shifting registers, explaining cultural references, shifting registers, etc. Additionally, the exercise promotes the development of soft skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, time management or organisation, which are extremely valuable to our students' employability. Finally, the activity is wrapped up with a debate about the article and how it might be related to the wheel of privilege and oppression, with the following questions being posed to the group:

- *What do you think about the actions of these millennials? Is it a new phenomenon?*
- *Do their actions have the potential to set a precedent and tackle inequality?*
- *Can we take any similar actions in our lives?*

In preparation for the following session, students are required to watch a Chilean film called *Una Mujer Fantástica* (Lelio, 2017), which is about the vicissitudes that a transgender woman suffers as a result of the death of her divorced partner. As part of the preparatory exercises, students will be asked to reflect on a series of questions about the film given that several themes, such as the harassment she faces at the hands of the different characters in the film, will be discussed in the upcoming session.

6. Session 4: Trans rights and toxic masculinity

The fourth session takes the film *Una Mujer Fantástica* and an adapted film review as a starting point to study, consolidate and revise a number of linguistic items such the rephrasing of the passive voice, the use of linking words, the textual conventions of film reviews, and technical vocabulary pertaining to the lexical fields of cinema and gender.

The choice of this film is two-fold. On the one hand, it allows teachers to expose students to the Chilean variety of Spanish and, on the other hand, it presents students with an inspiring trans character who is depicted as a fully formed person. That is, in the vein of highly acclaimed series such as *Orange Is the New Black* and *Pose*, the life of the protagonist of *Una Mujer Fantástica* extends beyond her non-conforming gender identity. Moreover, according to De Waal and Armstrong, Sebastián Lelio's Oscar-winning film *Una Mujer Fantástica* "brought unprecedented international visibility to trans rights in Chile and its lead actor Daniela Vega in particular. In what was seen as a milestone in the push to diversify the Academy Awards, Vega became the first openly trans presenter at the 2018 Oscars" (2020, p. 52). Above all, the film offers our LGBTQI+ and non-conforming students a crucial opportunity for self-recognition. Additionally, the benefits of using such a material also extend to our non-LGBTQI+ students, for it has "the potential to play a key role in enabling non-LGBTQ students to see the world through different eyes, enlisting their empathy and capacity for Other-recognition" (Gray, 2021). As Rebecca Kay (2005) asserts,

More recent studies, as well as contemporary social and political developments, have shown that dominant groups' grip on the power to define and their ability to subordinate alternative identities, values and perceptions of either past or present realities is not limitless. Indeed, marginalised people often use identities, both individually and collectively, as a means of challenging normative assumptions and prescriptive values.

Thus, just like every member of our society, trans people have every right to see themselves represented in films and media. Given that harmful portrayals and discussions could result in transphobia, it is of utmost importance to turn our classroom into a safe space for anti-hegemonic cultural engagement. That is, the viewing and discussion of the film should not be automatically male, straight or cis, but teachers should act as mediators and push for respect, sensitivity and nuance. Beyond studying and revising the list of key linguistic items mentioned above, the importance of this activity lies in the fact that in order to maximise their learning potential and overall educational experience, all students should feel comfortable about their identities in the classroom. It must be kept in mind that with this debate the teachers should seek to ensure LGBTQI+ inclusion, recognition and awareness in the modern language classroom, therefore fostering empathy, solidarity and understanding in all students, as well as paving the way for a more inclusive learning environment.

Firstly, students are invited to informally share their first impressions of the film. This warm-up task seeks to contextualise the film and to check students' understanding of the film. It is followed by a more in-depth debate based on the questions that they were to ponder in their preparatory activity:

- *Does Marina still benefit from male privilege?*
- *Identify different types of masculinities in the film.*
- *Can you find any examples of inclusive masculinity?*
- *Give examples of microaggressions that Marina is subjected to in the film.*
- *What is the importance of mirrors as symbols in the film?*
- *Explain the division between public spaces and private spaces in the film.*
- *Why is Marina a fantastic woman? Explore the theme of resilience in the film.*
- *How did the film help bring about social change in Chile?*

Besides discussing the film's technical aspects (acting, kinesics, lighting, cinematography, script, etc.) and learning key terms from the cinematic lexical field, students are also encouraged to use mediation in order to debate and explain technical concepts from the discipline of Gender Studies such as toxic masculinity – understood by Kimmel (2015) as the male-enacted cultural norms that are harmful to men and society and is linked to dominance, violence and sexuality – and inclusive masculinity (Anderson, 2009), which shifts away from the overbearing framing of masculinity as inherently oppressive. At the same time, when expressing their viewpoints, students are asked to pay special attention to using the appropriate linking devices.

Lastly, students are asked to read and analyse an adapted review of the film. From a grammar point of view, they are asked to rephrase the instances of passive voice in the text and ensure that the correct linking devices are used. They should also identify the main characteristics of this textual typology (structure, use of technicisms, tone, verbal tenses, use of descriptions, etc.). The final task consists in producing their own review of *Una mujer*

fantástica. Apart from developing their writing skills by acquiring tools to write argumentative texts and in particular film reviews, when commenting on the film's plot as part of their film reviews, students are also given the opportunity to practice not only audiovisual terms, but also lexical items associated with love (*divorciado, separado, novio, prometido, cita*) and with discrimination (*transfóbico, discriminada, paliza, cuestionada*).

7. Students perceptions on the tasks: Findings

Three types of gathering tools were used to find about students' opinions on the resources created and topic areas covered. Two weeks after the last session, they completed a questionnaire, teachers' notes and informal discussions carried out in class also helped to have a better understanding of how students felt when working on the tasks designed. The answers offered valuable information with regards to whether their sense of belonging increased when interacting with these materials, how much they enjoyed them and how useful they found the tasks provided in terms of grammar and lexical acquisition as well as a potential enhancement in mediation skills such as relying specific information, analysing and criticising views, collaborating to construct meaning and encouraging conceptual talk.

Students were given 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire, which comprised questions on the following areas: a) organisation and academic support, b) teaching, c) academic resources, d) assessment and feedback, e) overall satisfaction. In this later section, a question was asked regarding the sessions described in this chapter: "What did you think about the topics on inclusivity covered during this term (i.e. mediation, LGBTQI+, intersectionality, inclusive language, etc.)? Will you recommend your lecturers to cover them next year? Do you think they have worked to raise awareness about these topics? "

Out of 29 students who took the questionnaire, 19 answered to this question. 16 of these answers were positive, with comments highlighting the need to discuss these pressing social issues and the importance of raising awareness of EDI topics, as well as praising the chance they had been given to conduct respectful conversations and to discover new perspectives whilst fine-tuning their command of Spanish:

I think [the discussions] were very interesting and much appreciated by all members of the class.

I think they are important topics and it's great that our lessons are now more political and more useful in terms of the vocabulary learnt.

Yes, they [the sessions] have worked to improve awareness, and are very relevant.

I think that these topics are essential to discuss and learn more about, and enjoyed our in-class discussions. I do think that it has helped to raise my awareness and would therefore definitely recommend teachers to continue these current and relevant themes in the future.

Really eye-opening. They expanded my knowledge on the topic and even made me discover new perspectives and approaches while raising our awareness on those issues.

Conclusions, limitations and further lines of investigation

Over the last few decades social reform in the area of LGBTQI+ protection has been taking place in many countries around the world. However, a problem still faced by the language curriculum in general is that not only sexual and gender diversity but also intersectional tensions in our communities are suppressed. This is due to current materials remaining focused on the portrayal of a heteronormative world, whilst not enough discussion is given to the polarities around privilege and intersectionality. The main objective of this chapter has been to provide ideas for language resources that create a safe space for learners. This has been done by not silencing these reality contexts, whilst guiding the reader through four didactic units which have incorporated LGTBQI+ content, encouraged the usage of inclusive language and reflected on the concept of intersectional tensions in our society. These resources have been designed taking into consideration recent updates to the CEFR CV (2018, 2020) where mediation practice has gained pivotal recognition. Thus, it is key fostering students to develop a range of mediation techniques and strategies whilst interacting with authentic materials in receptive and productive manners first. Eventually they will be able to explain difficult concepts, extract main ideas from a source, debate societal issues and produce argumentative reflections on the areas covered during the lessons.

Providing insights for language resources rather than examining students' perceptions on learning from them has remained the main focus of this chapter. However, first impressions through the data collected (a questionnaire, teachers' notes and informal discussions) have confirmed that learners appreciate the incorporation of these essential topic areas to the language curriculum. Students appear to be active contributors to the discussions generated as it has been noted that they show interest and enthusiasm when completing the tasks designed by their teachers. Hence, conclusions reached from this angle are limited, so further lines of research should measure more precisely learners' reflections on their benefits for both language learning and a more transversal intellectual development that embraces diversity through a more inclusive world.

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Keyword definitions

LGBTQ+: It is an acronym that stands for the communities of Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual, Queer or Questioning members. These terms are used to describe people's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Intersectionality: It includes the understanding of people's experiences of discrimination and oppression based on the interconnected nature of social issues that can marginalised them such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, etc.

Didactic language materials: They are resources created to enhance language competence and skills.

Inclusive language: It acknowledges diversity, respect to people and is sensitive to the impact that words and phrases have on others. Thus, expressions and words that avoid biases or discriminate against groups of people based on gender, race, socioeconomic status and mental or physical ability are carefully used.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Companion Volume: It is an international standard for describing language abilities on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners up to C2 for those who master a language. It contains an extended set of CEFR descriptors replacing the 2001 one, with new descriptors having been created for mediation, online interaction, plurilingual/pluricultural competence and sign language competences.

Illustrative descriptors: They describe in the form of short sentences what the learner can do with the language at each different level of competence for each language scale or category from the CEFR CV.

Mediation: It acquires a pivotal role in the recent versions of the CEFR CV (2018, 2020), so a new set of descriptors for mediation has been created, which is situated at the very core of the linguistic modes of reception, production, interaction.